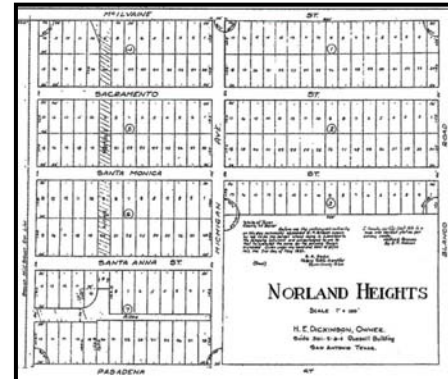


# HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE GREATER DELLVIEW AREA

## I. Early Beginnings: Development Before World War II



1925 Norland Heights Plat

The Greater Dellview Area was originally part of the San Antonio Town Tract, the northeast property line of the tract being today's Jackson-Keller Avenue. In 1940, the city of San Antonio began to expand north of Hildebrand. Subdivisions or "additions" platted in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, such as the northwest section of Los Angeles Heights and Norland, saw an increase in homebuilding activities that was accelerated by a strong post war economy. New annexations to the city's original 36 square miles included Los Angeles Heights (1940) and some areas north of Hildebrand.



1910 Map of Los Angeles Heights



1949 Ad from San Antonio  
Express News

## II. The Housing Boom: Post World War II Housing Development

With the end of World War II, returning servicemen, with many marrying and starting new families, were employed, had purchase power, and sought the "American Dream" of homeownership. The Federal Home Administration financed 4.56 million suburban homes in the 1950s. The GI Bill of rights allowed veterans to buy houses with no down payments. By 1956, 60% of American families owned their own homes.

## Historical Sketch of the Greater Dellview Area

Post World War II homebuilding was revolutionized by William Levitt, who applied assembly-line techniques to housing construction to turn out economical housing. His first project was Levittown on New York's Long Island. In 1947, Levitt began construction on what would be 17,000 modest, well-built homes in communities with churches, ball fields, schools and shopping. In earlier years, builders would complete an



*Example of a "Wonder Home"  
Subdivision*

average of four houses a year. In contrast, Levitt's goal was to build 30 to 40 houses a day. Levitt's construction process of 27 steps enabled a house that could sell for \$8,000 with Levitt making \$1,000 profit. The phrase "Wonder Homes" was coined for Levitt's affordable homes that offered comfort and convenience. Although the homes were virtually indistinguishable from one another, over time these homes took on the character of their owners who personalized them with additions, porches, dormers, and other features. With Levitt's home building concepts and a revenue stream of federal loans, the housing industry began to boom.



Economical laborsaving construction techniques lowered the cost of homebuilding so that homes were moderately priced. In an effort to improve efficiency, the U.S. Commerce Department encouraged small-scale house buildings to use the same construction short cuts that large-scale residential builders like William Levitt had adapted. Subdivided lots were the staging grounds for a home building pre-assembly lines. The Commerce Department advised that parts should be assembled off the site, and that lumber should be precut at the lumberyard in sizes needed and specified in the plans. Wall framing should be assembled on the floor and then tilted up into position. The outer walls and roof were to be installed first, leaving interior walls until the floors, ceilings, and utilities are completed. Windows were to be set up, glazed, hung and delivered to the job ready for installation and kitchen cabinets should be assembled and hardware applied before delivery.

Likewise, the creation of the National Interstate Highway System in 1944 supported the growth of urban areas. Construction began on San Antonio's Urban Expressway in 1947. In 1952, \$27 million was awarded to continue the construction of IH-10 which was heralded as the "backbone of the metropolitan traffic way system" and the "crossroads of an interregional highway network." With the adoption of the multi-billion dollar National

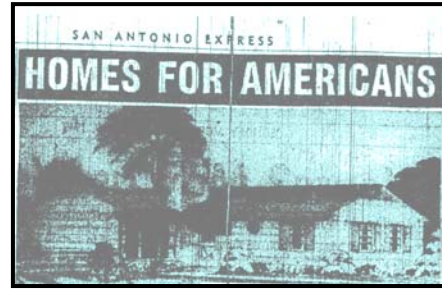


*IH 10 - IH Loop 410  
Interchange, 1961*

## Historical Sketch of the Greater Dellview Area

Highway Act in 1956, the federal government funded highway construction at 90% with 10% state match. By 1961, the IH-10 and IH-Loop 410 interchange was completed.

The city continued to expand as home construction flourished. V. F. Buchek, local builder and a director of the state Home Builders Association reported of the market in San Antonio that “the demand for housing is still brisk, that we need a minimum of 10,000 homes to sell at \$6,000 or less.” Lee B. Miller, executive secretary of the San Antonio Home Builders Association reported from 1941 through 1945 only 6,700 units were built. This figures doubled in 1946-1948. Other veteran home builders – V.F. Buchek, L.F. Fite, S.J. Burke, Jr., L.G. Hodges, Frank Robertson, and G. S. McCreless – each announced plans to build subdivisions of 100-200 homes in all parts of the city, including Highland Hills, University Park, and Jefferson Village. In 1949, Lee and Orts, who were finishing 25 houses in University Park, announced plans for a 25 acre subdivision at the corner of Basse Road and West Avenue that would include 100 cottages to sell for \$5,800 to \$6,000 and a community center.



In 1949, two new subdivisions were platted north of Basse Road. West Avenue Place – Quincy Lee, of Lee and Orts, contractors and the Wonder Homes Addition by Alvin B. Berler. By 1950, more subdivisions were recorded. Jackson Terrace was developed by Aaron Golden, owner of Wonder Homes, Inc. Allena Village, platted by Albert Hirschfeld, an insurance and investment agent, included a shopping center on Blanco Road and triangular park at Olympia. Fred W. Davis, loan manager of Southwestern Investments, platted the Brook Haven Heights Addition in 1950, and the Crestwood Heights Addition in 1952.



*Wonder Homes and Allena Village Plats*

Between 1951 and 1955, the Dell-View Addition, units 1-13, were platted by G.W. Delavan, Sr. of Dell Village, Inc. These tracts included a 3.3 acre park and 2 acre church site on Panda and Basswood and a 7 acre school site on Latch and Panda. In 1955, J. Walker Haymore of Southland Mortgage Co. platted Greenhill Village.



**DELL-VIEW ADD. UNIT I**

A SUBDIVISION OF A REMAINDER TRACT OF LAND OUT OF D.C.L. 10, 16, D-1, C.B. 3290, BEXAR COUNTY, TEXAS

**DELL-VIEW ADD. UNIT II**

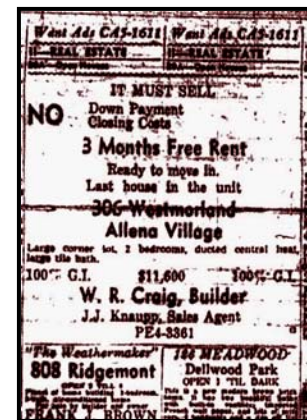
A SUBDIVISION OF A REMAINDER TRACT OF LAND OUT OF D.C.L. 10, 16, D-1, C.B. 3290, BEXAR COUNTY, TEXAS

connected the neighborhoods to the major corridors.

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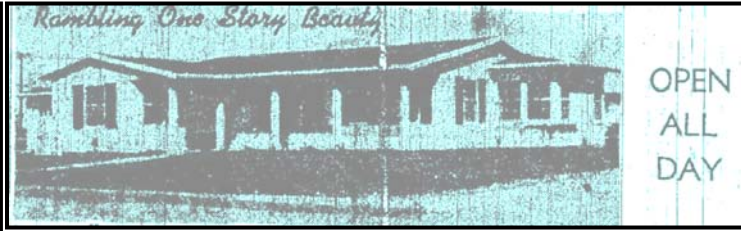
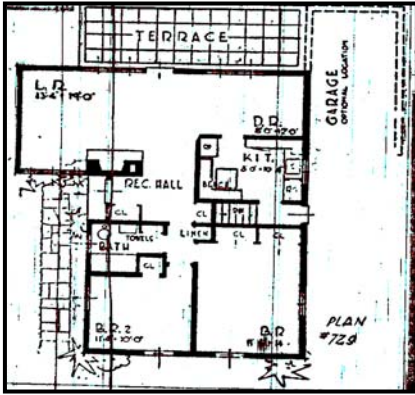
Home prices ranged from \$8,000 for two-bedroom homes to \$16,000 for three-bedroom homes with exteriors designed with "quality workmanship and material." Other amenities such as "music in every room, food waste disposers, screened porches, aluminum windows, Venetian blinds, washing machine connections, spacious baths and closets and kitchens with Formica tops" were geared for convenience and comfort.

Many homes in San Antonio built between 1935 and 1950 were a Minimal Traditional style. The one-story cottages were small and lacked decorative detailing. Popularized by California builders in the 1940s, one-story Rambling Ranch homes had low-pitched roofs with a wide eave overhang, and exhibited little detailing except for a large picture window. Later in the 1960s, builders marketed the one and a half story Split-level home that allowed more interior space, separating upstairs bedrooms from “noisy” living areas on the first floor.

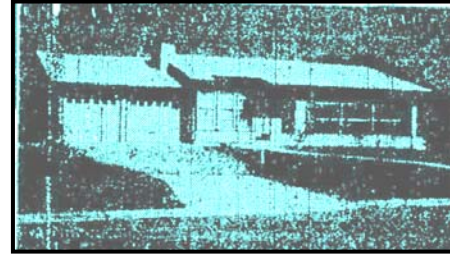


Ads in San Antonio  
Express News, 1955

## Historical Sketch of the Greater Dellview Area



San Antonio  
Express News  
Classified Ads,  
1955



No home was complete without modern appointments. A compact L-shaped home could be built on a narrow lot, yet allow a spacious living space by integrating the living and dining rooms. A 1955 San Antonio Express-News ad illustrated a “Complete Ranch Living Room” consisting of a sofa bed, armchair, coffee table, platform rocker and end table could be purchased for under \$180. A chrome dinette set with a streamlined appearance would make a “new fashion statement.”



### III. Shopping and Community: Retail Development & Community Institutions

The 1955-56 San Antonio City Directory provides a snapshot of the Greater Dellview Area business enterprises. Dell View Village shops at the 2100 block of Vance Jackson included McLaughlin Hardware, the Dell Village Shoe Store, Dell View Drug Store, and the Dell View Model Market. Other neighborhood services on Vance Jackson included cake bakers, TV repair shops, service stations, barbers, beauty salons and dress and fabric stores from Spencer Lane to Nassau. West Avenue, from Basse to Cliffwood, was lined with neighborhood retail establishments, while many were under construction in 1956. Sporting the name of the addition were Wonder Cleaners and Wonder Washateria. El Jarro Mexican Food and the New China Super Market provide an eclectic mix of restaurants. Allena Village at the 4500 block of Blanco was home to Kelly’s Beauty Salon,

## Historical Sketch of the Greater Dellview Area

Piggly Wiggly No. 9, the Allena Village Community Center, Inc. and Jaffe and Martin Contractors, among other services. The southern end of Blanco Road from Hildebrand to Pasadena was lined with icehouses, cocktail lounges, auto parts and repair, laundries, drive in restaurants, and a feed company.

Neighborhood businesses, churches and schools began to transform the subdivisions in to a community. St. Marks United Methodist Church was established in 1953 on the Heusinger Estate at 1902 Vance Jackson Road. Churches listed in the City Directory included Concordia Lutheran Church on 1826 Basse Road, Allena Baptist Chapel at 2314 Basse Road, and Dellview Church of the Nazarene at 102 Saxon Drive. Established schools in the area were Neal School No. 108 at 3407 Capital Avenue, Woodrow Wilson School 103 at 1421 Clower, and Arnold Elementary at 467 Freiling Drive.

In 1961, Community Realty, a partnership headed by former San Antonio Mayor Charles L. Beck, opened Wonderland Mall. The mall consisted of 61 acres, by 1964 the mall had 62 stores and services, employed 1,200 persons, and generated 15,000 visitors a day. In 1977, the Lehnendorff Group of Hamburg, Germany acquired a majority interest in Wonderland and undertook \$30 million renovation. Ten years later in 1987, Wonderland was renamed Crossroads, showcased an indoor palm pavilion, outdoor plaza with water fountain, and Santikos Theaters. In 2003, more changes came to Crossroads when a SuperTarget occupied 178,000 square feet of space and the City of Balcones Heights established Convention Center space. In 2004, the Trammel Crow Co. purchased Crossroads Mall, which today has 650,000 square feet of floor space.



*Wonderland Mall  
aerial perspective, 1961*

The major arteries that bordered and criss-crossed the Greater Dellview community pay tribute to prominent San Antonio citizens. Jackson-Keller Avenue followed the northeast boundary of the early San Antonio Town Tract land grant. Judge C.A. Keller (1851-1918), a native of Illinois, was active in the Independent Order of Oddfellows. William Houston Jackson (1803-1888) was a Brigadier General in the Civil War and was engaged in cattle ranching on the M. Leal grant near the present day IH-10/Loop 410 interchange. Vance-Jackson was also named for William Vance (1813-1878) who with his father and brothers built the first U.S. Army Barracks in San Antonio. West Avenue was named in honor of DuVal West (1861-1949), a successful lawyer who served as assistant U.S. Attorney and U.S. Judge of the Western District. As an adventurous lad, he explored the Big Bend region for silver and participated in cattle drives. In 1915, he traveled to Mexico to serve as a personal emissary to President Woodrow Wilson. Edgar A. Basse opened his first self-serve grocery store in 1918, which developed into a chain of 32 Texas grocery stores that joined the national Piggly-Wiggly chain.